

(Washington, DC)— Congresswoman Gwen Moore today joined the U.S. House of Representatives in passing bipartisan legislation that would provide the nation's firefighters and police officers with basic workplace rights.

"Our nation's first responders risk their lives to protect our communities and we owe it to them to protect their workplace rights," Congresswoman Gwen Moore said. "Wisconsin already allows its firefighters, police officers and EMT's to discuss workplace issues with its employers but many states do not, and this legislation makes sure that all public safety employees throughout the country have this right."

The House today passed the Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act of 2007, which will require each state to provide minimum collective bargaining rights to their public safety employees however that state may choose. The legislation would relegate most decisions to the state legislatures while outlining certain basic provisions that must be included in state laws.

Roughly 20 states currently do not fully protect the collective bargaining rights of public safety employees. This legislation would empower public safety employees to negotiate issues with their employers regarding their hours, wages and workplace conditions. The bill does not permit strikes by public safety officers nor does it provide for mandatory binding arbitration.

"The brave women and men who serve our communities face danger everyday and they deserve to have a say on their workplace conditions," Moore said.

The House voted 314 – 97 to pass H.R. 980. Moore was a cosponsor of the bill. It will now go to the Senate.

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